REMARKS

Claims 1-37 are pending. Claims 1, 7, 11, 17, 21, 27, 31 and 35 are amended herein. No new matter is added as a result of the claim amendments.

Oath/Declaration

The instant Office Action states that the oath or declaration is missing. Properly signed and fully compliant declarations were submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office when the instant application was filed. A copy of those declarations is included with this response.

102 Rejections

The instant Office Action states that Claims 1-4, 7-14, 17-24, 27-33 and 35-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fernandes (U.S. Patent No. 6,014,135).

Independent Claim 1 recites that an embodiment of the present invention is directed to a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, where the method includes "rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements." Claims 2-4 and 7-10 are dependent on Claim 1 and recite additional limitations.

Independent Claim 11 recites that an embodiment of the present invention is directed to a computer system that implements a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, where the method includes "rendering ... a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements." Claims 12-14 and 17-20 are dependent on Claim 11 and recite additional limitations.

Independent Claim 21 recites that an embodiment of the present invention is directed to a computer-usable medium that causes a computer system to perform a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, where the method includes "rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements." Claims 22-24 and 27-30 are dependent on Claim 21 and recite additional limitations.

Independent Claim 31 recites that an embodiment of the present invention is directed to a graphical user interface (GUI) for helping a user perform tasks in

software, where the GUI includes "a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and wherein a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements." Claims 32-33 and 35-37 are dependent on Claim 31 and recite additional limitations.

Thus, according to the claimed embodiments of the present invention, there are at least two groups of graphic elements visibly displayed at the same time, and at least one element in the second group is activated when one of the elements in the first group is selected (thereby guiding the user through the graphic elements in logical order).

Applicants respectfully note that it is important to distinguish between "activate" (active) and "select," and that the claims as written make this distinction. That is, as recited in the claims, a graphic element that is active and selected will initiate an action, while a graphic element that is inactive and selected will not initiate an action. In contrast to the present claimed invention, Fernandes equates "selecting" and "activating;" that is, according to Fernandes, an icon is activated by selecting it. Fernandes does not appear to show or suggest icons that are "inactive" (e.g., that are visible but will not initiate an action when selected). More importantly, Fernandes does not show or suggest active and

visible icons that, when selected, cause certain inactive but visible icons to become active, as recited in independent Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Fernandes does not show or suggest the present claimed invention as recited in independent Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31 traverse the basis for rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and are in condition for allowance. As such, Applicants also respectfully submit that Claims 2-4, 7-10, 12-14, 17-20, 22-24, 27-30, 32-33 and 35-37 traverse the basis for rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as these claims are dependent on allowable base claims and recite additional limitations.

Also, Applicants respectfully submit that Fernandes does not show or suggest the particular arrangement of the graphic elements recited by Claims 7, 17, 27 and 35. Specifically, Applicants respectfully submit that Fernandes does not show or suggest the claimed embodiments in which "said first plurality of graphic elements comprises first icons organized in a first row and said second plurality of graphic elements comprises second icons organized in a second row adjacent to said first row, wherein said first icons and said second icons are arranged to indicate a hierarchy of said tasks within said logical order." For this additional reason, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 7, 17, 27 and 35 traverse the basis for rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

<u>103 Rejections</u>

The instant Office Action states that Claims 5-6, 15-16, 25-26 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fernandes in view of Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (AAPA).

Claims 5-6, 15-16, 25-26 and 35 are dependent on independent Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31 and recite additional limitations. Thus, by demonstrating that the combination of Fernandes and AAPA does not show or suggest the limitations of Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31, it is also demonstrated that the combination of Fernandes and AAPA does not show or suggest the limitations of Claims 5-6, 15-16, 25-26 and 35.

As presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that Fernandes does not show or suggest the present invention as recited in independent Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31. Applicants also respectfully submit that AAPA does not overcome the shortcomings of Fernandes.

Specifically, Applicants respectfully submit that AAPA, alone or in combination with Fernandes, does not show or suggest a method that includes "rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements" as recited in independent Claim 1; a computer

system that implements a method that includes "rendering ... a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements" as recited in independent Claim 11; a computer-usable medium that causes a computer system to perform a method that includes "rendering a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and activating a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements" as recited in independent Claim 21; nor a GUI that includes "a first plurality of graphic elements and a second plurality of graphic elements, wherein said first and second pluralities of elements are visibly displayed at the same time regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said first and second pluralities of graphic elements are active or inactive ...; and wherein a second portion of said second plurality of graphic elements are activated in response to user selection of an element from said first plurality of graphic elements" as recited in independent Claim 31.

In summary, Applicants respectfully submit that Fernandes and AAPA, alone or in combination, do not show or suggest the present claimed invention as

recited in independent Claims 1, 11, 21 and 31. As such, Applicants also respectfully submit that Claims 5-6, 15-16, 25-26 and 35 traverse the basis for rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as these claims are dependent on allowable base claims and recite additional limitations.
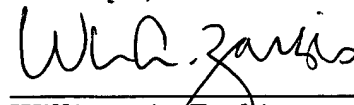
Conclusions

In light of the above remarks, reconsideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested. Based on the arguments presented above, it is respectfully asserted that Claims 1-37 overcome the rejections of record and, therefore, allowance of these claims is solicited.

The references cited but not relied upon have been reviewed. These references were not found to show or suggest the present claimed invention: U.S. Patent Nos. 6,225,998; 5,588,104; 6,121,965; 5,905,496; and 6,239,800.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Declarations